

NEBRASKA ALIVE TO THE EVILS OF ORALISM

One of the most interesting conventions held during the past summer was that of the Nebraska State Association. Nebraska, by a law passed by a recent legislature, is one of the latest states to become a hotbed of oralism, and in 1912-13 the N. A. D. endeavored to have the law amended, but without success.

The deaf of the state are determined to keep up the fight against the spread of oralism to the exclusion of the combined method.

The following are excerpts from a report of the convention:

Nebraska is passing through what may be regarded as a critical period in the history of the education of the deaf of the state. Since the meeting of the Association three years previously the oralists succeeded in having the State Legislature pass a law favorable to the propagation of their method, and also brought about the appointment, as superintendent of the State School for the Deaf at Omaha, an avowed and uncompromising advocate of oralism. The unwarranted activity on the part of the oralists in Nebraska was quite properly resented by members of the Association, and naturally furnished the cue for much of the business and discussion of the convention.

Prof. F. W. Booth, Superintendent of the Nebraska State School for the Deaf, contributed an interesting and instructive address on "The Problems of Deafness." Reviewing his own professional experience extending back over thirty years, he could see that great progress had been made in the education of the deaf in all civilized lands—especially in the United States. In this country at least schools are sufficiently numerous, conveniently located, well equipped, liberally supported, supplied with efficient teachers, and having a well arranged course of study, all calculated to give every normally minded deaf child a good education, free of cost. Gallaudet College was held up as the present culminating point in our system of education of the deaf, and he spoke highly of the graduates of that worthy institution. The third problem—that of the adult deaf after they have left school—presented little difficulty, since its solution depended upon the efficacy of the education given during the school period. With the education properly attended to, the problem feature is practically eliminated when the deaf pass into the third general classification—citizenship. Mr. Booth stated that at the recent Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf, at Staunton, which he attended, the many deaf present could not be distinguished without previous acquaintance from the hearing body, so well had their education been attended to during their school period. Such an excellent showing he said reflected the highest credit upon the schools and afforded the greatest encouragement to the members of the teaching profession.

In a discussion of Mr. Booth's problems, the Rev. Dr. Cloud called attention to the fact that the deaf who had made such a favorable impression upon Mr. Booth at Staunton were all the products of the Combined System—not one being the product of the oral method. He maintained that the combined system of education, which raised the deaf to a point where even an expert like Mr. Booth could not distinguish them from the hearing, must be fundamentally correct and ought to be preserved. The merit of the combined system, as shown by the superiority of its results, was self-evident to every well informed and fair minded person and did not need the force of legislative enactment to compel its use in the schools. To resort to legislation with which to bolster their method, as the oralists in Nebraska have done, is a confession of the weakness of their method and of an inability to win in fair and open competition along rational professional lines. The problems are nearest to the deaf themselves. They are fully competent and resolutely determined to solve them in a manner which makes most of their own advancement and happiness. The fact that they continually and unsparingly condemn and single oral method, is proof positive that it is a pernicious fad, inadequate as a means of imparting instruction, and unsuited for all except a very small proportion of the deaf. The deaf put education far above speech and the ability to read the lips. Speech is an accomplishment, and lip-reading is mainly guess work. As taught by the oralists they are, in most cases, not worth the price.

While the education of the deaf in America has been in progress for approximately one hundred years and practically every state in the Union has its schools for the deaf, it is a fact that the general public is not well informed either as to educational questions connected with the deaf or the social status of the adult deaf. People are too prone to look for the remarkable or the ludicrous in those who do not in every way correspond to their own state of being. Of late years there has been a tendency among our oral friends to interest the public in exceptional cases where, with semi-mutes or those especially gifted, unusual results have been attained. This works a decided hardship to the deaf as a class, for the reason that those who have taken note of these cases have come to the conclusion that there is a new method of teaching the deaf and that all deaf persons should be able to speak and read the lips fluently. The result is that we, who are not proficient, no matter what our educational or other attainments may be, are pitied, first, because we are deaf, and second, because we have not had the advantages of the new method. The tendency of today is to forget the "ancient landmarks," and many schools for the deaf are wandering from the practices that have made America lead the world in deaf-mute education, and are being lured by the will-o-the-wisp of pure oralism. The filial love we bear for these schools

does not permit us to overlook this error, for we know from our own observation and experience that the happiness and success of the deaf will never be attained by depriving them of what may well be called their "mother tongue."

Who appreciate that parents of deaf children are often led to believe that their children can be taught practical speech and lip-reading without regard to their mental or physical equipment, and that they naturally clamor for such advantages for their child. Our oral friends and the superintendents of schools are largely responsible for this misinformation on the part of the parents. The oralists have advertised their wonderful "new" method, and paraded exceptional cases of success, until they have created what all good advertisers aim for, a demand. To show that their schools are not behind the times and that they can meet the demand, the superintendents of our State schools have paraded their own accomplishments along this line until we now have the much-talked-of "Parental Pressure." It is a case of where the superintendents have sown the wind and are reaping the whirlwind.

As our schools are now conducted, the superintendent practically dictates the method of instruction used in his school. To be sure there is a board of directors, or its equivalent, but this board usually acts upon the recommendations of the superintendent. It is the rule that these men have little or no information with regard to methods of educating the deaf, and are consequently little else than figureheads. We hold that the superintendents of schools for the deaf should not be arbitrary in establishing methods, that they should consult with those who know something of the question, and with the alumni, who must be competent to offer expert testimony because of their actual experience.

This tendency toward pure oralism passeth understanding. At the conventions of the American Teachers of the Deaf we have seen class after class of young children exhibited in oral drills. We have seen them get up and sit down, hop, skip and jump, run, clap their hands, and blow their noses, at spoken command; but we have never yet seen the product of an oral school mount the platform and advocate oral instruction for the deaf, nor have we seen one of these marvels of restored-to-society-beings interested in or advancing the cause of deaf-mute education. On the other hand, we do not see the raw material of combined system schools exhibited at these conventions, but we do see at every one of these conventions about a hundred men and women, who were educated in combined system.

In one of the largest schools in America there is a teacher, who had forty years' experience in that school. His conviction is that since oralism has taken a hold in that school the pupils' command of English has fallen off. The reason he assigns for this is: The bright pupils are placed

Continued on Page Four

THE OBSERVER

P. L. AXLING - - - Editor

The Observer is issued every two weeks on Thursday. It is published in the interest of the deaf everywhere.

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OBSERVATIONS.

One must see a little of the world if he would be wise. Staying at home and associating only with his own narrow world has the tendency to drive one's mind into a rut. He comes to feel there is nothing more to know than what is transpiring close at hand, and he soon becomes oblivious to the fact that but a short distance away there are people of his own class who are doing things or who may be merely lumbering along in a hum-drum existence. Let him get away from home for a while and rub elbows with his fellows elsewhere—he soon discovers he must either learn from them or teach them.

* * *

I left Seattle one month ago, on very short notice, and brought up at the town on the Willamette. The fact that I was coming had preceded me by a good twenty-four hours, and it was not long before I had the opportunity of meeting and making the acquaintance of a large number of Portland's very nice deaf people. It was soon evident—and here no reflection is intended on any one—that there was here a field fertile for good work. The Portlanders have been pulling in all directions too long and found it practically impossible to get together and work as one. The cause lay far back and deep down.

* * *

With half a dozen Seattleites in their midst some of them were of the opinion the time was propitious for a change, and they lost no time in setting things a-movin'. They have shown a most commendable spirit and are sincerely anxious to bring about a new order of things. They are asking

the Seattleites to help bring the factions together and to do what can be done to form an organization that shall have the strength and the unity of the famed Puget Sound association of the deaf. Naturally the Seattleites feel flattered but they are taking hold with a vim and have promised to do their utmost to help their Oregon brethren.

* * *

The conditions prevailing in Portland are also to be found in other cities where there is any number of deaf people. Organization is what they may lack, or it may be they have no one among them who is big enough to take the initiative and unite the discordant groups. Petty jealousies, the result of minds too narrow to see beyond their own horizon, have the upper hand. Such conditions, when long prevailing, have the tendency to make every one suspicious of his neighbor and no one can live in harmony. It is a deplorable condition, indeed, but those whom it touches soon become so caloused to it that they do not realize there is a better existence at hand.

* * *

In Portland there are more deaf people than there are on Puget Sound, but one does not meet so many at any gathering as one may find at any week-end gathering in Seattle. Why? Because of the conditions related in the preceding, and because of several other things. It will take sometime to bring all together and make them appreciate the advantages of coming together more frequently and learning a little more of their fellows who are living perhaps next door to them, but never come in contact with them. The material for a good, big organization evidently is here; it but lacks the bending into form and the polishing up. These operations are in a fair way to being reached in a little time, then Seattle will have to look out or be cast into the shadow!

* * *

Next year will see the fourth biennial convention of the Washington association of the deaf. The association at its Seattle convention last year named Vancouver, Wash., as the place and left the selection of the date to the executive committee. The officers are now considering the date and find it a hard matter to reach any decision. It is anticipated that a large number of eastern deaf will want to take the northern route on their way to the San Francisco convention, either going or returning. The San Francisco gathering will be held the week of July 19 to 25, and if the Washington state convention is in session the previous week there will undoubtedly be a number of our eastern brethren on hand to see how the western deaf do things.

This, date, however, seems inconvenient for a large number of the association members. An earlier date is preferable, but no date has yet been found that suits every one. The Fourth of July in Vancouver is always a gala day. The United States troops stationed there have a variety of sports not to be found in those towns where the trooper Gilead is not to be found. They tell me it is worth coming miles to see their sports, and some are urging that the convention be held at the same date as last year in order that the delegates may have a touch of Uncle Sam's militarism. The idea is a good one, but the committee would prefer to hear from the members of the association and get their opinions.

* * *

The suggestion has been made that the executive committee might make a change in the place of meeting, sending the gathering to Seattle again, mainly for the reason that Seattle will be most likely to have numbers of the eastern deaf there during the time the convention would be in session. I have had time to ponder over the suggestion, and do not favor it. Seattle does not want it; the 1913 convention named Vancouver, and most of the deaf of the state are looking to a reunion in Vancouver in the near future. And then, there is Portland, where the deaf will likely be well organized by the time the Washington state convention meets, and where an Oregon state association might possibly be organized next year. The Portland deaf have a very friendly feeling for the Washington deaf, and if our convention is held in Vancouver next year you may depend on seeing a goodly number of the Web-footers on hand. We should not disappoint them. What do you say?

Since coming to Portland I have received two or three letters from friends elsewhere asking what are the opportunities for work in this city. To these and to every one else who has an idea that Portland is a field of easy picking I wish to say: "Don't." Portland is a good town in every way, but she has no surfeit of labor for any one coming from outside. Her own citizens are unable to get all the work they should have at this time, and a stranger would have a harder time. I was told the other day there are at least fifteen deaf out of employment here, with no immediate prospect of getting onto something. The condition will get worse as winter comes on apace. Better stay where you are known and you will exist somehow.

A.



TO DEAF OF WASHINGTON.

Below is the paper read by Rev. Dr. J. H. Cloud, of St. Louis, before the National Association of the Deaf, August, 1913:

"Two hundred years ago there was born in France a man who was destined to become the recognized founder of deaf-mute instruction and the father of the language of conventional signs, Charles Michael de L'Epee.

"Of a family prominent in the annals of his country possessed of ample means, endowed with a liberal education, having a heart strong in love and sympathy for humankind, and with every prospect of a brilliant career in whatever calling he might choose for himself, he departed from the beaten path of glory and made a new path, more glorious still, to be followed, in later years, by Sicard, by Clerc, by the Gallaudets, and by all who are yet to be the true friends, teachers and benefactors of the deaf.

"There stands in Versailles, on the outskirts of Paris, marking the birthplace of De L'Epee, a noble statue, heroic in size, lofty in sentiment, of rare artistic beauty, the work of a deaf sculptor, and the gift of the deaf of France. This statue is but a partial expression of the veneration in which De L'Epee is held by the deaf of his own country, a veneration shared by the deaf of other lands—but by none more than by the deaf of the United States.

"It is fortunate that the elder Gallaudet, in his quest for information as to how the deaf might be taught, was finally directed to France. From the school founded by De L'Epee and presided over by his illustrious pupil and successor, Sicard, Gallaudet obtained for the American deaf their two greatest boons, manual spelling and the sign language. The American deaf, under the auspices of this Association, have erected at Washington a statue to their greatly beloved national benefactor, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. The National College for the Deaf at Washington bears his name. The anniversary of his birth is receiving a wider observance with each succeeding year. His place in the hearts and minds of the American deaf as their "friend, teacher and benefactor" is secure for all time. But De L'Epee, the universal benefactor of the deaf, deserves a more fitting recognition at our hands than he has yet received.

"Let there be erected, under the auspices of this Association, at some place to be determined, a statue that will be a permanent memorial and a witness of the love and esteem which the American deaf have for him who founded the first public school for the deaf, the most successful method of educating the deaf, and who gave the

deaf the manual alphabet and the language of conventional signs, Charles Michael de L'Epee."

* * *

The De L'Epee Memorial Statue committee has organized and entered upon the duties for which it was created by the convention of the N. A. D. This committee consists of Rev. Dr. J. H. Cloud, of St. Louis, as chairman; Rev. Father McCarthy, of New York, as secretary, and Anton Schroeder, of St. Paul, as treasurer.

Washington is one of the 21 Western states coming under the supervision of the undersigned in the allotment that has been made among the members of the committee.

Mrs. Eva Seeley, So. 56th and Terry streets, Tacoma, Wash., has been selected as state agent to look after the collection of funds in Washington and has been given authority to appoint subordinate collectors in all cities in the state. All authorized collectors will be furnished with official subscription blanks. This project being timely and worthy, it may be confidently anticipated that the enthusiastic and generous co-operation of all the Washington deaf will be made.

ANTON SCHROEDER,

Treasurer De L'Epee Com.
2172 Carroll Ave., St. Paul.

NO ROYAL ROAD.

"There is no royal road to proficiency in any art or science. Be assured I speak from observation a certain truth. There is no excellence without great labor. It is the fiat of fate from which no power of genius can absolve you.

"If you would excel you must pay the price; there is, however, this consolation: Patience and diligence, like faith, can remove mountains."—Samuel H. Miller.

The above utterances are of peculiar interest when one learns that the author, Mr. Miller, is entirely blind, but in spite of this he is one of the board of directors of the Virginia School for the Deaf. The handicap under which Mr. Miller labored was no bar to his ambition and for many years he was the editor of an influential daily paper in Virginia and was considered one of the prominent men of the state.

Truly, indeed, patience and perseverance will overcome great obstacles, and those of us who are content to wander along in the daily grind of life should not envy the success of others that is only attained by diligent labor and often self-sacrifice in many things others consider necessities.

W.

Let us hope for the war to close, for peace over the world, and to stop this strife. Do you need the paper? Better subscribe for it. Only one dollar a year.

PUGET SOUNDERS.

George Ecker, of Whites, was in town last week on business.

Rev. Fedder held the usual monthly service for the deaf at his church, East Union and Twenty-second avenue, last Sunday. About sixteen were present to listen to his sermon.

Olof Hanson made a trip to Leavenworth last week to make arrangements for the harvesting of the apple crop on his ranch there. He was gone four or five days.

Roy Hawley, who was in Seattle for a while last spring visiting his parents and looking for work, writes the Observer that he is now in Brooklyn, N. Y., and likely to remain all winter, as he has steady work at his trade of a press feeder.

Cyrus Vincent is now at the King County hospital, a small operation having been necessary on his lips. He will probably remain there through the winter, as the officers have promised him board and lodging in return for a little work around the place.

Mrs. Webster, a hearing lady whose parents were deaf people, recently gave a luncheon to several Seattle people to meet Mrs. Leach, who is staying with her. Those present were Mesdames Gustin, Klawitter, Koberstein, Haire, West, Tousley, Ziegler and Waugh.

Lawrence Belser recently made a trip to Wenatchee and visited with his mother for a few days. He says there is a great crop of the famous big red Wenatchee apples, but prices are lower than usual, because the export portion of the trade has been largely cut off by the European war.

A. E. Hole, finding work becoming a little slack at the upholstery factory where he works, took a few days off and visited Victoria, B. C., last week. Mr. Hole had to obtain a passport from the American authorities here, which shows that in Victoria, although far from the scene of the European war, still feels its influence.

The esteem in which True Partridge is held by the Paterson-O'Brien Dental Co., for which concern he is the bookkeeper and cashier, was shown last week by the "boss" of the firm, and the other employes with their wives, paying a visit to his home and leaving behind for Mr. and Mrs. Partridge several beautiful and dainty presents for a certain coming event.

Miss Myrtle Hammond has been removed to her home at 1009 Summit avenue north, after a stay of five weeks in the Seattle General hospital. It was expected that the plaster cast enclosing her fractured limb would be removed this week, but it will probably be more than a month yet before she will be able to mingle among the deaf.

Nebraska Alive to the Evils of Oralism
Continued from Page One

in the oral department, and so much time is wasted on them in endeavoring to give them impracticable speech and impracticable lip-reading that their English is neglected. The dullards are placed in the manual classes, and being dullards, cannot attain any great proficiency in the English language. The great claim of our oral friends is that the oral method teaches English all of the time, for English is always used; but it is fallacious, for the reason that certain contortions of the mouth and the production of mechanical sounds is not English, and much time is wasted on mastering what is nothing less to the deaf than a language of lip-signs, which most deaf people never can master in a manner that will make them of practical benefit. The testimony of this teacher is borne out by other teachers of long standing in other schools. In short, where oralism has increased in State schools, their efficiency as educational institutions has lessened; this is further demonstrated by the fact that in the State of Washington there is a small school with one hundred and forty pupils. Its faculty is the old-fashioned one, composed largely of deaf teachers with a sprinkling of hearing teachers, who are proficient in the use of signs, with enough oral teachers to preserve and improve the speech of those who have or can acquire "practical" speech. This school, today, in spite of the great distance its pupils have to travel to reach the National College for the Deaf, at Washington, D. C., outranks in actual number of representatives at college the great schools for the deaf of the East that are right next door to the college. These Eastern schools are, with a few exceptions, given over to the oral propaganda.

San Francisco

BY D. S. LUDDY
Member Local Publicity Committee, N. A. D.
Burlingame, Cal

The local N. A. D. committee had a regular meeting at the California School for the Deaf on the evening of September 18, all the members being present. This is the first meeting for several months. The members have been working in the meantime, though. They will meet more often hereafter. The financial report was satisfactory, and new plans were laid to swell the fund.

The Sphinx Club held its first annual picnic at Engleside Beach, San Francisco, on September 9. There were sixty of the deaf there.

Leo White spent a few days at Stockton lately. He confesses there is something attractive there.

Wm. Hutton celebrated his 70th birthday on September 21. He is hale and hearty as usual.

Miss Cox, of Fresno, is in the city and may become a permanent resident.

Miss Mabel Luddy has secured a lucrative position as stenographer in the Alameda County Recorder's office in Oakland. We have several other

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deaf lady stenographers in California.

When the writer lived in Los Angeles and worked on one of the big dailies there—among his fellow typos was a fellow who had lost his hearing after he had grown up. He had worked in the East and Canada, but was a native of Scotland, where he had been a member of the famous Gordon Highlanders, before he lost his hearing. He was a star craftsman. The only way the writer could talk with him was by using the English double-hand alphabet, which he had learned from deaf-mutes in Scotland, before he had become deaf himself.

Miss Viola E. Mutch, who graduated from the California School for the Deaf last June, is now a teacher in the Hawaiian School for the Deaf.

One of the plans of the local 1915 committee to raise funds was an appeal to parents and friends of the deaf pupils at Berkeley. When they went home last June each one was given a subscription black and circular letter explaining the purpose. It worked successfully and those raising the largest amounts will be given prizes. The following are the names of the little workers and the amounts they raised:

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Albert White | \$ 2.00 |
| Versa Steinman | 11.00 |
| Nome Sangmaster | 3.00 |
| Viola E. Mutch | 78.00 |
| Laurie Rolls | .50 |
| Ada Tom | 12.95 |
| Bernice Moldrup | 9.50 |
| Mark Hanna | 1.60 |
| George Francis | .90 |
| Thomas Marlatt | 6.25 |
| Almeda Lambdin | 10.00 |
| Hattie Sturm | 48.12 |
| Cardoza Sisters | 58.90 |
| Ruth Pittman | 10.00 |
| Clinton Willis | 17.80 |
| Esther Anderson | 11.00 |
| George Phillips | 6.00 |
| Clara Johnson | 5.00 |
| Edward Wile | 1.85 |
| Hyrum Beck | 12.60 |
| Genevieve Beck | 7.00 |
| Mary Garofalo | 11.00 |
| | \$325.37 |

The largest flagpole in the world was dedicated on the Exposition grounds on September 22. It is 232 feet high and is the gift of the people of Astoria, Oregon. From its stately height there now floats a forty-nine-foot American flag, which is the gift of a patriotic Oregonian.

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Bible Class for the deaf meets
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Eighth Ave. & James St. All welcome
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